III. *A Letter from Dr.* William Muſgrave, *Fellow of the Coll. of Phyſ. and R. S. to Dr.* Sloane, *concerning a Periodical Palſy.*

A *Periodical Palſy*, you will allow, is a very unuſual Diſtemper, I do not remember either from Books or Men, to have met with more than Two Inſtances of it. The *German Ephimerides* (*Dec.* 1. *Annis* 9. & 10. *iterumque Dec.* 2. *A.* 3.) mention a young Man in the Dutchy of *Wirtenburg*, who, for the Space of Twelve Years, ſpoke only One Hour in the Four and Twenty; and that always at the ſame time, *viz.* between Twelve and One of the Day. The other Inſtance has fallen within my own Obſervation: Being well acquainted with the Particulars of it, I will Report it to you:

I was in *Auguſt*, 1687. deſired, by a poor Woman at *Aſtrop-Wells*, to look on her Daughter. They both came from *Stow* in *Gloceſterſhire* (as they had often done) for Work. The Daughter was about Twenty One, of a Sanguin Complexion; and, as to private Matters, well enough: She had been for ſeveral Days leſs Active than uſual; and after that, had (a Week before I ſaw her) loſt her Speech, and the Uſe of her Legs: She reel'd like a Perſon Drunk, and was (by thoſe who knew not her Condition) often taken to be ſo; but, I think, unjuſtly; for ſhe had neither Money nor Intereſt to make her ſo. In her Legs there was little or no Senſe of Feeling; her Left Leg was drawn up as in a violent Cramp.

Her Ruddy Sanguin Look directed Bleeding; but that did not relieve her. I then gave her Spirit of *Sal Armon.* Succinated Steel with Gentian, Amber, Caſtor, and other warm Cephalics. A Bliſter was laid on her

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Neck. A Bath (of Wormwood, and other hot Herbs) prepared for her Legs; *Ung. Martiatum* uſed to anoint them after Bathing.

By theſe Means, ſhe was, in the Space of Three Days, able to ſpeak again; and in a little time, by the Help of Crutches, able to go. But then omitting the Medicines, tho' but one Day, loſt her Speech again; and, returning to them (eſpecially the Spirit) recovered it as ſoon.

When not able to ſpeak, ſhe had a manifeſt Alteration in her Face; the Strength and Tonick Vigour of it abated; her Eyes grew Dull, her Lips Pale. I have in this Juncture given her Thirty Drops of the Spirit: In the Space of Two Hours the Change has been ſurpriſing; her Eye has quickened, a Colour come over her Face, her Speech return'd.

In *July*, 1688. I was again at *Aſtrop*; whither the Mother (encouraged by the Succeſs of the laſt Year's Phyſick) brought her Daughter to me, and gave me the following Account of her, *viz.* That after the Phyſick I had (the Year before) preſcribed her, was all ſpent; Her Speech, and the Uſe of her Legs left her; firſt in *September*, 1687. particularly on a *Tueſday*, about Noon; that it return'd the *Saturday* following, near the ſame Hour: and that from *Michaelmas*, 1687. to the time of our Diſcourſe (which was on *July* 18 following) her Speech and Strength of Legs obſerved the ſame Period (of going off on *Tueſdays* every Week, and returning on *Saturdays*) with only Two Exceptions, *viz.* That once they returned on a *Friday*, another time not before *Sunday*.

She tells me, That her Daughter was, the preceding Winter, very Weak, and in Danger of Death; That her Appetite was much abated; That ſhe ſometimes choſe to eat Bread, Water, and Salt, boyl'd together; That

now, as the Summer came on, ſhe recovered ſome Degree of Strength; That ſhe had loſt no Senſe at any Time, beſides that of Feeling; which was by the firſt quantity of Medicines, reſtored effectually, and without Relapſe.

I underſtand from her, That the *Menſes* were regular, as to Period; but as to Quantity unequal; with this farther Obſervable, That when they were moſt, ſhe (the Daughter) was worſt.

I was inform'd alſo, That before her Speech uſed to go off, ſhe conſtantly loſt, for an Hour's Space, the Uſe of her Left Arm; That when her Speech was leaving her, ſhe would ſtammer out ſome few Words, and after this, on a ſudden, became Mute: That when, not able to ſpeak, ſhe often moan'd, and made a melancholly, complaining Noiſe: That, her Speech did uſe to return (as it went off) all on a ſudden, and at once.

She always had, as her Speach ceas'd, and Two Hours after it was gone, a pain in her Left Side, including Arm and Leg: Her left Foot was then Drawn up, as beforementioned: Her Face was high colour'd when ſhe loſt her Speech, pale when it return'd: No part of her Body wither'd, but ſhe whole; was generally cold.

Some time before ſhe was at firſt ſtruck Speechleſs, her Hands uſed to Tremble, but have been of late more ſteddy: Nor was ſhe now ſo Dull and Heavy as formerly; but for the generality more Brisk and Chearful than in her State of Health.

When ſhe has her Speech ſhe goes beſt; but is always forc'd to uſe a Stick, being never able to go ſteddily: She ſpeaks by Intervals, as diſtinctly as ever, and as loud; can ſing, when capable of ſpeaking; but at no other time.

This Account the Mother gives me of her Daughter, delivering it with a great deal of Country Simplicity; which recommended what ſhe ſaid. As to her ſelf, I found ſhe ſometimes had convulſive Fits; and tho' a poor labouring Woman, was extreamly Hyſterical.

I at the ſame time obſerv'd the Daughter, to have a pale ſickly Look; a heavy Eye, a low Pulſe; and to be much waſted in Fleſh. She continued in my Neighbourhood about Two Months. Curioſity (as well as Charity) prompted me to ſee her often. I did ſee her almoſt every Day for the whole time. I made both Mother and Daughter frequently repeat to me, the manner of the Fits, and (by croſs Interrogatories) endeavoured to catch them in differing Stories: But their Accounts were, in Subſtance always the ſame. I endeavour'd to diſcover ſome Matter of Fact, which might diſprove them; and to that Intent examin'd thoſe who were near them: But could light on no ſuch Inſtance.

I then repeated the former Courſe, furniſhing her with large Quantities of her old Medicines; and ſo diſmiſs'd her, with Orders to let me hear again from her, when the Phyſick ſhould be all ſpent.

In *September*, 1688. ſhe came (with her Mother) from *Stow* to *Oxon*, (that is almoſt Twenty Miles) on Foot; thank'd me for what I had directed her, and beg'd a farther Supply of Medicines. She accordingly had them, and by the 10th of *Nov.* following, was grown ſtrong, and to all Appearance, well as ever.

For Two Months then, laſt paſt, ſhe did go and ſpeak every Day, but not at all times of the Week; for her Speech left her (as formerly) on *Tueſdays*; but (now) return'd the next Day after Noon. Thus ſhe continued to the Summer following; not ſpeaking (in more than Twenty Months) on any one *Wedneſday* Morning.

In the Summer, 1689. hoping to compleat the Cure, I procured (by means of a Contribution made on purpoſe) for her, a large Stock of Medicines for the Winter following: but ſince that Summer have heard nothing more of her.

There were ſeveral Opinions concerning this young Woman; ſome (you will eaſily imagin) thought her Bewitch'd; others, that ſhe counterfeited: But the Favourers of one and the other of theſe Opinions, were equally Strangers to her Caſe.

Can it be ſuppoſed that a Girl of very ordinary Underſtanding (as indeed this was) and a Ruſtick Education, ſhould leave a Courſe of Living tolerably well, and (to the great Prejudice of her Health, and Danger of her Life) carry on, for the Space of Two Years, a Humour which depriv'd her of ſo much Converſation, and brought both her, and her Mother, to ſuch exceſſive Hardſhips and Neceſſities, extraordinary? Chooſe, at the ſame time to take vaſt Quantities of Phyſick (for ſuch ſhe was ſeen to take) gain Ground under the Uſe of that Phyſick; and in Proportion to it, loſe that Ground again, upon omitting; regain it upon reſuming her Phyſick; and this evidently, manifeſtly, and frequently, and yet all this while Diſſemble? Sir, I beg leave to ſay, I think it was not in her Power ſo to do.

Indeed Credulity argues Weakneſs of Mind; and is, deſervedly attended with Reproach. It is offenſive to Philoſophy; whoſe venerable Records it interlines with falſe Stories, and idle Tales. But on the other Hand, 'tis alſo true, that Scepticiſm is not leſs a Fault; for that alone renders the whole Book of Nature inſignificant. What can the cleareſt Experiment, or the beſt diſcovery import to him, who will not hear, who will not ſee?

Exon, June 4. 1698.